

Summary of testimony to jobs session for Ag, Mining, Timber, Tourism, and Unions
January 8, 2011

The outfitting industry faces numerous regulatory obstacles to jobs creation or retention. Many of these regulations came as a result of HB 196, the companion bill to HB 195, which instituted the outfitter sponsored license. I-161 has done away with the HB 195 provisions in Fish and Game law. All the corresponding provisions in Board of Outfitter law, from HB 196, remain in force.

In addition to creating impediments to growth of the outfitting industry, and to individual prosperity of outfitters, these provisions create a huge paperwork burden on the staff of the Board of Outfitters. Currently, the Montana Board of Outfitters office is \$60,000-\$70,000 in the red. Licensed outfitters and guides are decreasing in number. Simply harging more for outfitter and guide licenses, and charging higher fees for transactions and transfers will not solve this shortfall. MBO could realize significant savings by repeal of all laws and rules which do not enhance the safety and enjoyment of our guests. I have detailed some of the rules and duplications of effort in my oral testimony, and have provided copies of some of the documentation required of outfitters on an annual basis.

Persons wishing to become new outfitters must put up \$1800.00 in fees before being allowed to take the test. The application is 18 pages long.

Guides receive a 7 page packet to fill in for their first guide license. One full page is devoted to questions which have nothing to do with the guide's ability to supervise the endorsing outfitter's guests safely.

Many fishing outfitters are limited by FWP rules on which days, which stretches of river they can guide nonresidents, as well as the total number of days they can float in a season.

Workmen's compensation rates are around 16% for most outfitters. Our Idaho counterparts pay 3%. We could certainly use that additional money for paying wages.

Please contact me with any questions.
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